

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00
PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-12 /073 W
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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7395
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN NY IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 1723

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT)

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR LE US IS
SUBJECT: ISRAELI THREAT OF RETALIATION AGAINST FURTHER PLO
SHELLING

REF: STATE 79038

SUMMARY: SYRIA WILL COUNSEL PLO TO OBSERVE CEASEFIRE
IN SOUTHERN LEBANON. ACCORDING TO FONMIN KHADDAM, GOL CAN AND
SHOULD MOVE MORE SWIFTLY TO DEPLOY OWN TROOPS TO SOUTH, INCLUDING
TYRE. GOL HAS 2-3,000 REGULARS READY TO GO. FONMIN MAINTAINS
THAT FOREIGN "VOLUNTEERS" DO NOT CONSTITUTE A PROBLEM. HIS
COMMENTS SUGGEST THAT, PUBLIC POSTURING ASIDE, SARG IS CONTINUING
TO COOPERATE WITH GOL TO KEEP OUT ADDITIONAL PALESTINIAN SUPPORTERS.
END SUMMARY.

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1. MET WITH FONMIN KHADDAM AT 1000L TO MAKE DEMARCHE
REFTEL. ADDED, INTER ALIA, THAT FORMATION OF UNIFIL IS POSING
UNUSUAL DIFFICULTIES. IN PREVIOUS UN PEACEMAKING EFFORTS,
GOVERNMENTS INVOLVED IN HOSTILITIES ASSUMED BINDING
RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CEASEFIRE. WE KNOW THAT
SEVERAL GOVERNMENTS CONTACTED BY SYG HAVE BEEN EXTREMELY
RELUCTANT TO CONTRIBUTE THEIR NATIONAL UNITS BECAUSE OF

LACK OF GUARANTEES FOR CEASEFIRE. SAID WE WERE URGING ISRAEL TO CONTINUE PROMPT WITHDRAWAL AND NOT RETALIATE, BUT CONTINUED SHELLINGS BY PALESTINIANS WILL AT MINIMUM ONLY SERVE TO DELAY ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL.

2. IN REPLY, KHADDAM RECOMMENDED WE CONTACT GOL TO ENCOURAGE PALESTINIANS CONCERNING CEASEFIRE. THEN PROMISED THAT DAMASCUS WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH PLO ALSO "BECAUSE WE ARE CONCERNED THERE BE PROMPT ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL. SYRIA IS CONVINCED THAT CONTINUING ISRAELI OCCUPATION IS BOUND TO FURTHER COMPLICATE SITUATION." I ASSURED HIM WE WOULD BE TALKING TO GOL THIS MORNING AND KNEW OFFICERS OF SIILASVUO'S STAFF WERE MEETING WITH PLO LEADERSHIP IN BEIRUT AS WELL.

3. SAID THIS IS TIME FOR QUIET NERVES IN DAMASCUS AND AREA GENERALLY AND I KNEW THAT WASHINGTON WOULD WELCOME NEWS THAT DAMASCUS IS READY ENGAGE ITSELF IN COUNSELLING PALESTINIANS TO CEASEFIRE.

4. WE HAD BRIEF DISCUSSION ABOUT A FEW OTHER ASPECTS OF SITUATION IN LEBANON. KHADDAM CLAIMED SYRIA IS DOING ITS BEST TO ENCOURAGE GOL/PLO HARMONY BECAUSE, WHEN ISRAEL WITHDRAWS, IT WILL BE IMPERATIVE TO HAVE THE PALESTINIAN/-LEBANESE RELATIONSHIP "ON A MORE SECURE BASIS". HE DECRIED MAJOR HADDAD'S ANNOUNCEMENT YESTERDAY THAT HE WAS FORMING A "LEBANESE ARMY OF THE SOUTH" AS REBELLION
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AND SAID SARKIS SHOULD DISMISS HADDAD.

5. ASKED IF HE ACCEPTED GOL ESTIMATE THERE WERE 2-3 THOUSAND LEBANESE REGULARS READY TO MOVE TO THE SOUTH, KHADDAM SAID THIS CORRESPONDED WITH SYRIAN INFORMATION. THE PROBLEM IS THAT THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT IS CONGENITALLY SLOW TO TAKE ANY STEP AFFECTING ITS ARMY. GOL SHOULD BE APPLYING COMPULSORY MILITARY SERVICE BUT APPEARS RELUCTANT TO DO SO. "SYRIA CANNOT STAY FOREVER IN LEBANON AND WE ARE URGING THAT THE LEBANESE ARMY BE REORGANIZED ASAP."

6. ASKED ABOUT ANY FURTHER MOVES OF "VOLUNTEERS" COMING FROM LIBYA AND IRAQ, KHADDAM REPLIED SCORNFULLY THAT IRAQ IS OFFERING ONLY "ASSISTANCE ON ITS TV." HE ESTIMATED THAT NO MORE THAN 500 MEN HAD ARRIVED FROM IRAQ, MOST OF THEM PALESTINIANS, AND STATED FLATLY THAT NONE OF THEM HAD ENTERED LEBANON AFTER THE PASSAGE OF UNSC RES 425 (SIC). NO FORCES, HE ASSERTED, HAVE COME OR ARE COMING FROM LIBYA.

7. TYRE. ASKED ABOUT SITUATION IN TYRE, KHADDAM SAID HERE AGAIN PROBLEM IS ONE OF GOL WILL. PALESTINIANS HAD TOLD SYRIA THEY WOULD NOT OBJECT IF GOL DECIDES TO SEND REGULAR

LEBANESE FORCES INTO TYRE. SARKIS SHOULD ACT AND SEND 500 TROOPS NOW AND NOT WAIT FOR ANYONE'S PERMISSION. I SAID OUR REPORTS INDICATED THAT PALESTINIANS MIGHT MOVE TO KEEP LEBANESE REGULARS OUT BOTH BECAUSE OF TYRE'S GEOGRAPHIC SITUATION AND OF WHAT WE UNDERSTAND ARE MAJOR PALESTINIAN ARMS CACHES IN CITY. KHADDAM REPLIED THERE WOULD BE NO CONFO-
TATION.

8. COMMENT: KHADDAM'S REACTION WAS FULLY POSITIVE AND AT NO POINT DID HE APPEAR TO INTERPRET DEMARCHE AS RELAYING AN ISRAELI THREAT.

9. FONMIN'S REMARKS DOWNPLAYING SIGNIFICANCE OF PALESTINIAN VOLUNTEERS WHO HAVE ARRIVED LEBANON AND IN EFFECT SAYING NO MORE
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WOULD BE COMING FROM IRAQ STRONGLY SUGGESTS THAT, PUBLIC POSTURING ASIDE, SYRIA IS INDEED STILL COOPERATING WITH GOL TO PREVENT FURTHER ENTRY OF FEDAYEEN SUPPORTERS INTO LEBANON (BEIRUT 1651).
MURPHY

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